[P.395, A]

771 Few, if any, Washo activities do not contain an element which we can describe as religious, supernatural, or magical. This element is most commonly revealed by specifically ritualized behavior carried on while a regular course of action is being taken by a Washo. The following sections will deal with this ritualized behavior and the rationale for it offered by the Washo.

CONCEPTION AND CONTRACEPTION

842 Apparently the Washo have no specific ritual to encourage conception. They are extremely fond of children and desire as many as possible. No Washo has ever heard of, or will admit having heard of, infanticide among the Washo, although they have heard of the practice among other Indians. The birth of an illegitimate child, despite the attitude of whites, is greeted with as much joy as that of a legitimate child.

[847] [848]

842 789 However, it is believed that conception can be prevented by manipulation of the afterbirth. When the afterbirth is expelled it is wrapped in a piece of deer hide or cloth and buried. It is always placed right side up if a woman desires to continue bearing children. If she wishes not to have children it is buried upside down. If at a later time she wishes to become pregnant, she will turn the earth where the upside-down afterbirth was buried. Informants say that not many people do this any more, mainly because younger women go to the hospital to have their babies, but that many people know how and some may still do it.

[178]

842 754 Certain Indians are reported to be able to prevent the birth of children without the knowledge of the woman concerned. This requires the cooperation of a woman who has just had a child and who will give the magician the afterbirth. It is then buried or hidden upside down and the woman concerned will not become pregnant. The method of transferring the influence of the afterbirth from the real mother to the victim was not explained, and in fact the practice was revealed with a good deal of reluctance.

BIRTH
(2178-2293)

844 Informants report that the baby was not touched, either by the mother or her attendants, until the afterbirth was expelled. The birth and recuperation were carried out in a pit filled with warm ashes. A slow birth was blamed on the belief that the mother had slept too much or been lazy during her pregnancy.

[845] [843]

The mother was not allowed to eat salt until the baby's umbilicus dropped off, usually in two or three days. The umbilicus was dried and hung on the right side of the cradleboard to insure that the baby would be right-handed.

[263] [856]

846 The baby's hair was cut about thirty days after its birth. Until that time the mother was not permitted to eat meat or to leave her bed of ashes. However, one of my informants who had borne eight children claimed never to have spent more than two weeks in her lying-in bed. She did insist that "in the old days" women adhered to the traditional thirty-day period.

[262] [302] [178]

969 southern California; but since the statement came in answer to direct inquiry
114 and no further details were forthcoming, its truth cannot be accepted without further evidence." None of the other investigators among the Washo has found evidence of an annual mourning ceremony. Our informants did not report it.

Birth Ceremonies

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844 Women were active during pregnancy and there were no special observ-
[854] ances before birth. When the baby was born, it was bathed, wrapped with its arms at its sides, and placed in a winnowing basket (modal). Bertha Holbrook says that the baby was not bathed again until the umbilical cord fell off. 846 Stewart (1941, 408) says the baby was bathed about every five days and placed in a new basket after each bath. 844 The afterbirth was arranged with the umbilical cord inside and buried upright. Stewart (1941, 408) says the afterbirth
[842] was wrapped in bark before burial. The Washo believed that if the afterbirth was buried upside down the woman would have no more children. The baby's umbilical cord was kept moistened and was wrapped with ground pinenut bark.
[828] When it fell off it was tied to a stick and this in turn was tied to the right side of the winnowing basket. The Washo believed that this would make the baby right-handed.

846 The husband went to a stream and bathed after the birth. He left a
[431] present beside the stream which anyone could come and take. Lowie (1939,
[751] 305) reports that after the birth the husband gave some man a buckskin, which helped to keep disease away from the infant. Until the cord fell off, the husband took a cold bath every morning; was not supposed to sleep at night; ate
[461] no meat, salt or grease; did not gamble or smoke (Stewart, 1941, 409); and was constantly working. The husband's incessant activity was to make the
[431] child industrious in later life. When the cord fell off, the mother announced it. Then the husband went hunting, killed some animal, and distributed it in his household. On this day any nonrelative could come and help himself to the property of the husband. After the cord had fallen off, the husband returned to normal life and could again eat meat, salt and grease.

[834] For a month after the birth, the mother did not bathe; ate no meat, grease, or salt; drank only warm water; used a scratching stick (Stewart, 1941, 408); and she and her husband had no sexual intercourse. Stewart
[514] (1941, 409) says the couple was continent for from six to 12 months. For two weeks the mother lay tightly covered upon a warm bed. The bed was made by digging a shallow ditch, putting hot sand and ashes in it, and covering it with grass. She did not leave the house during this time, even to relieve herself. The Washo believed that the woman had to be cured inside after a birth and that the hot bed and food taboos aided in draining out the bad blood.

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[272] [263] After the child was born, great care was taken to prevent the mother from getting cold. She was given a drink of warm water with "sugar" (ǯigimba) from the sugar pine. She was then submitted to further pressure by the midwife in order to insure the complete removal of the afterbirth. Some say that she sat up with knees under her chin the first night after the infant was born to effect the final draining.

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[262] [515] The woman could not eat anything except pinenut soup and was not washed until the umbilical cord (ʔiʔip) fell from the child, about four days later. The woman remained in bed about nine or 10 days and had an older woman as an attendant during this period. There were often several women in attendance, but the person designated as midwife handled the baby and tied the cord.

[834] For a month (for a young mother, two months) after the child was born the mother abstained from eating meat, fat, or salt. "A woman who had given birth to four children no longer observed this taboo (Jack)" (Lowie, 1939, 305). The parents abstained from sexual intercourse for up to six to 12 months after a birth. At the end of her confinement the mother bathed, painted herself, and gave away her old clothes.

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[412] [752] [824] The umbilical cord was cut off about 4 in. from the child's abdomen with a stone knife or a sharp cane blade. It was then tied with a string or sinew an inch from the abdomen. After this the baby was washed and the cord bound to the abdomen with a strip of deerskin. Two medicinal roots were applied to the cord. A greasy salve (dõ·ša?)[2] was put on next to the abdomen and cottonwood tree bark (tšša? ʔi·š) was placed on top of the cord before it was bound down. The cord and medicines were kept moist with water.

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[853] [757] [824] Some say that the baby was not nursed by the mother for two days, but others seem to think there was no delay or that it was given warm water to suck from the end of a rabbit's foot. A baby powder was made from the ashes of the bark of the cottonwood tree. The baby was wrapped in woodchuck or rabbit skins. A grass or bark pad was put under the infant and changed when necessary.

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[842] [754] After the child had been washed the afterbirth was disposed of. The piece of cord that had been cut off was coiled clockwise, placed back in the amniotic sack on top of the placenta, and the whole carefully wrapped in grass or bark and buried in warm ashes with the cord up. This was done in order that the mother would have more children. Should she not want any more children, the placenta was turned over and buried so the cord was on the bottom and was thus counter-clockwise. The midwife took care that no one watched where she buried the placenta for, if it were destroyed, illness would come to the mother.

2 From Indian Balsam Leptotaenia dissecta Nutt., according to Juanita Schubert and Personal Communication.

844 [842]

would come to the mother. Or if it were turned over, her wish, either for more children or for none, would be thwarted. The place where the placenta was buried was remembered so it might be turned at any time the woman may change her mind.

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As the placenta was associated with the life of the mother, so the piece of the umbilical cord that fell from the child was associated with the life of the child. This piece of the cord was carefully preserved until a convenient opportunity arose for disposing of it according to custom. The cord of a girl[3] was finally placed in a hole bored in the root of a living sunflower (su·gil). Care was taken that the cord was straight so the child would not have a crooked back. The cord of a boy was placed in the cavity of a short length of the femur of a deer and hung perpendicular from a tree. Stewart's (1941) informants said that the cord was placed on the infant's cradle, and Clara Frank agrees with this. [824] [826]

While the mother was being delivered of her child, the father had to stay away. He could not sit in the doorway of the house, or the baby would not be born easily. As soon as the father heard of the child's birth he took a bath in a nearby stream. Stewart (1941) reported that the bath was given to him by another man, that he ran before the bath, and that the father was forbidden meat, fat and salt during the wife's confinement. Lowie (1939, 305) wrote that "The husband shared his wife's fast only for the first two or three days after the birth, being subsequently free to eat anything." Gambling was also forbidden the father during this period. [844] [525]

A present of a buckskin or other clothes was given by the father to another man after the birth of his child. At the end of the observances he gave away his old clothes, bathed, painted himself red, went hunting, and gave away his first kill. Throughout the confinement the father supplied the wood for the fire. [431]

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In recent times, both baby and mother were bathed the first morning after the baby's birth. The mother cut a small tuft of her own and her baby's hair and gave a small present of dress goods, a handkerchief, or money to any of the women present. This helped to bring good luck. The month of meat taboo is still observed by the more conservative Washo. [431] [777] 846

The mother used to stay in bed for a long time. She was massaged with a salve (do·ša?) and had red ocher (sawášan) applied to her body. She was instructed not to get up too quickly, and she would exercise a little each day. She would have her hair trimmed on the day of the baby feast (nášwnan ?ěmluhaya?).[4] [759] [302]

3. Wyethia mollis Gray, according to Juanita Schubert personal communication

4. Literally "she (or they) feed the baby," acc. to William H. Jacobsen, Jr., pers. communication

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There is considerable variation with respect to beliefs about twins. Lowie (1939, 305) wrote that "People liked twins and sometimes laughed at one of them, saying 'That man does more work than others' (because he is double)." Susie Dick reported that Sadie had twins and one was buried alive. [847] Manta said that one of a pair of twins always died, and that when she buried one of her twins the other one had died in sympathy. Another informant said [777] that one of a pair of twins died at birth in Waco Valley, and that it was generally bad luck to have twins.

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If the mother would not tell who the father of a newborn child was, the child may have been allowed to die. A few informants deny this, but some say that if the mother desired to keep the child she was always free to do so.

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Lowie (1939, 305) wrote that "A barren woman sometimes adopted her cousin's child and kept it for good. If a woman died in childbirth, her mother took care of the infant."

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[833]
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Certain positions of sexual intercourse were considered better for producing boys and certain for girls. Also a game of string figures like "cat's cradle" was played by women to determine the sex of an offspring.

Girl's Puberty

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When a young girl between 12 and 14 years of age first began to menstruate (gumisásum) she told her mother. This started a several week period of ritual observances that would officially see her through the change from a girl to a marriageable woman. This ritual prepared her for her life as a woman, generally, and for proper behavior during menstruation in particular.

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Any menstruation involved certain proscriptions, just as did all excretion. One should bury body wastes of all kinds. One should not spit in the fire or burn finger nails. When the hair is cut off it should be thrown in a stream, or buried with a wrapping of sagebrush bark deep in the mud. But burning was prohibited. It would be a terrible thing to burn a baby's feces, for example.

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Whenever menstruation occurs the woman is forbidden salt, meat, fish, or fat of any kind. The flow lasts longer for those who eat meat. She should not scratch herself. When her menstruation is over she should wash in cold water, but to drink or bathe in cold water during menstruation would cause sickness. Eating ice cream today by menstruating women is sometimes [753] explained as the cause of sicknesses.

Washo NT20
Achomawi N55

CULTURE ELEM. DISTRIB.: XIV—STEWART: NORTHERN PAIUTE

	Ts	K1	K2	Ku	To	Tō	Pa	Wa	At	Sa	Tg	Wd	Ki	AE
2038. Postmarital residence: patrilocal	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	+
2039. Matrilocal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2040. Variable	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	+
2040a. Matrilocal until 1st child	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
2041. Adultery: wife sometimes beaten	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
2042. Wife sometimes killed	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
2043. Wife sometimes rubbed with blood	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2044. Paramour beaten	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2045. Paramour's horse killed	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
2046. Husband sometimes divorces	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2047. Divorce may be for: sterility	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
2048. Infidelity	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2049. Incompatibility	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
2050. Prostitution	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2051. Premarital intercourse: with betrothed only	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+

KINSHIP RELATIONS

Avoidances

2053. Mother-in-law son-in-law	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
2054. Speech taboo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
2056. "Respect" required	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
2057. Passing in front of is taboo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
2058. Avoidance continues for life	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
2060. Brother sister	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
2061. Obscenity avoided	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+

Joking Relations

2066. Brothers-in-law (aid each other)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2067. Cousins (aid each other)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Adoption

2068. Orphan adopted	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2069. Adoption when parents impoverished	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

BERDACHES OR TRANSVESTITES

2090. Male berdache (tüvasa)	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2090a. Sterile	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
2091. Wears woman's dress	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+
2092. Does woman's work	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	+
2093. Has female organs	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2094. Marriage to man	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
2095. Lives with man	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
2099. Regarded indifferently	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2100. Female berdache (moroni noho or tüvasa)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2100a. Sterile	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2101. Wears man's dress	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
2102. Does man's work	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
2103. Has male organs	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2104. Marriage to woman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
2105. Lives with woman	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
2106. Is shaman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
2109. Regarded indifferently	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2110. Fire test in youth	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

[P. 405]